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July 22, 1999

JUL 22 1999

HAND DELIVERY

Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, S.W., Room TW-B204
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: **In the Matter of Deployment of Wireline Services Offering
Advanced Telecommunications Capability Proposed Rulemaking**

Dear Ms. Salas:

Pursuant to Section 1.419 of the Commission's rules, transmitted herewith, on behalf of Prism Communication Services, Inc. are an original and four (4) copies of its reply comments in the above referenced proceeding

A "Stamp In" copy of this filing is also enclosed. Please date-stamp the "Stamp In" copy and return it to the courier delivering this package. If there are any questions regarding this filing, please contact the undersigned counsel.

Sincerely,



Renée Roland Crittendon

cc: Service list
Terry Peck
Sophia Corona

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**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554**

NOTED
JUL 22 1999

In the Matter of

**Deployment of Wireline Services Offering
Advanced Telecommunications Capability**

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CC Docket No. 98-147

**REPLY COMMENTS
OF PRISM COMMUNICATION SERVICES, INC.**

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Dated: July 22, 1999

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

In these reply comments, Prism reaffirms its support of the Commission's proposal to rely on the expertise of existing industry standards setting bodies for the development of spectrum compatibility and management practices. As Prism points out, the bulk of commenters agree that the T1E1.4 Committee is the best forum to develop such standards and to evaluate interference concerns. In addition, the majority of parties are in agreement that spectral masks are an effective means to minimize cross-talk and other network degradations. However, Prism reminds the Commission to set clear guidelines so as not to leave the standards development or spectrum management process open-ended.

Prism also continues to urge the Commission to promote binder administration practices that are not overly restrictive, but integrate procedures which leave the door open to new innovations. In addition, consistent with the views of several commenters, Prism recommends the adoption of a swift and effective framework for disputes affecting degradation of the network.

Finally, while Prism supports the Commission's adoption of line sharing, it urges the Commission to carefully contemplate the policies, processes and methodologies by which it will implement its proposed measures.

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of)	
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Deployment of Wireline Services Offering)	CC Docket No. 98-147
Advanced Telecommunications Capability)	
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REPLY COMMENTS
OF PRISM COMMUNICATION SERVICES, INC.

Prism Communication Services, Inc. ("Prism"), by and through counsel, hereby submits its reply comments on the Federal Communications Commission's ("FCC" or "Commission") Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the above-referenced proceeding concerning long-term standards and practices for spectrum compatibility and line sharing.¹

In its FNPRM, the Commission requested comments regarding what measures might facilitate the timely development of long-term industry standards and practices on spectrum compatibility and management to further the development of new and innovative loop technologies.² The Commission also tentatively concluded that line sharing is technically feasible, and sought comments on operational, pricing and policy issues to determine whether

¹ See *In the Matter of Deployment of Wireline Services Offering Advanced Telecommunications Capability*, Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, CC Docket No. 98-147, FCC 99-48 (released March 31, 1999) ("FNPRM").

² FNPRM. at ¶8.

line sharing should be mandated nationally.³ In brief, the Commission has taken steps to ensure a marketplace for advanced services that is conducive to investment, innovation and meets the needs of consumers. Prism reaffirms its support for the Commission's pro-competitive objectives, and submits the following reply comments in light of other parties' submissions.

A. The FCC's Reliance on Industry Standards Bodies Is Appropriate and Should Contemplate Effective, Non-Restrictive and Timely Spectrum Compatibility and Management Practices.

In its FNPRM, the Commission tentatively concluded that the standards-setting process should be competitively neutral both structurally and procedurally; that representation in the process should be equitable; and that active participation by all sectors of the industry is central to the process.⁴ Prism's comments supported these tentative conclusions.

In its comments, Prism encouraged the Commission to rely upon existing industry standards bodies for the development of long term spectrum compatibility standards and practices. In particular, Prism noted that standards-setting bodies such as T1E1.4 are intimately familiar with loop spectrum management and compatibility issues, have already assumed the task of developing spectrum masks and other standards, and characterize their membership as open and balanced. The majority of commenters agree with this approach, finding that the T1E1.4 Committee is the best forum to develop standards and to evaluate interference concerns.⁵

³ *Id.* at ¶ 8.

⁴ *Id.* at ¶ 79.

⁵ See Comments of AT&T at 5; Comments of Bell Atlantic at 14; Comments of MCI WorldCom at 5.

The bulk of parties also agree with the Commission's assessment that spectral masks are an effective means to minimize cross-talk or other degradations.⁶ As Prism previously discussed, the generic mask is a particularly appropriate way to lay out spectral bands without causing undue interference and the use of such masks will not restrict demodulation techniques or unduly limit design options. On the other hand, technology specific spectral masks, while allowing for a myriad of technologies, may cause some delays in the standards development process. Whatever method is ultimately used, the Commission should deem acceptable any approach to defining spectral compatibility which complies with an accredited industry standards body and is technology neutral. Moreover, Prism urges the Commission to set clear guidelines and timetables so as not to leave the standards process open-ended. Rather, the Commission should emphasize the need to accelerate the standards development process in order to bring advanced services to market more rapidly.

Prism also supports those commenters that agree with the Commission's initial determination that the FCC should serve to facilitate industry development of fair and open deployment practices.⁷ However, Prism reminds the Commission that spectrum management practices should take into account the speed at which technology is evolving and incorporate a sense of urgency. The failure to formulate management practices in a timely manner will ultimately result in delays for new innovations and stall the deployment of advanced services.

⁶ See Comments of AT&T at 5-6; Comments of Northern Telecom, Inc. at 6; Comments of Sprint Corporation at 3.

⁷ See Comments of MCI WorldCom at 4; Comments of Sprint Corporation at 2.

Accordingly, the Commission should be cognizant of this real and potential problem and set definitive timelines.

In addition, Prism continues to urge the Commission to promote binder administration practices that are not overly restrictive, but integrate procedures which leave the door open to new innovations. In this regard, Prism agrees with those commenters that support binder group administration practices that promote competitively neutral and nondiscriminatory access to incumbents' loop facilities.⁸ Prism reiterates, however, that the Commission should allow operators to use their own mutually agreed upon models and guidelines for spectrum management, provided they are technically sound, nondiscriminatory, and widely available.

Finally, in the area of dispute resolution, Prism has stated that it believes that disputes are best resolved by the Commission via an expedited review process such as the *Rocket Docket*.⁹ While some parties differ with respect to the appropriate forum for such disputes, the sum of commenters agree -- a swift and effective framework for disputes affecting degradation of the network is crucial to the viability of advanced service offerings.¹⁰

⁸ See Comments of AT&T at 11; Comments of Sprint Corporation at 5.

⁹ See *In the Matter of Implementation of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Amendment of Rules Governing Procedures to Be Followed When Formal Complaints are Filed Against Common Carriers*, 12 FCC Rcd. 22497 (released November 25, 1998) ("Rocket Docket").

¹⁰ See Comments of AT&T at 10; Comments of MCI World Com at 9; Comments of Sprint Corporation at 6.

B. Prism Supports The Adoption Of Line Sharing, Provided That The Associated Technical, Operational And Costing Issues Are Fully Addressed.

While Prism supports the FCC's proposal to mandate line sharing,¹¹ it reiterates its concern that the Commission must thoroughly examine the myriad of implementation issues -- technical, operational and economic -- that may arise. In particular, untimely or inadequate information will prevent competitive carriers from reaching the marketplace and instead ensure that incumbents are the only carriers able to provide advanced services. Incumbent LECs, for example, are fully capable of providing a database of qualified loops without extraordinary efforts. As such, the Commission should require ILECs to characterize loops in an automated fashion and determine whether particular loops are candidates for high-speed services. In addition, the Commission must ensure that the incumbent's operational support systems ("OSS"), many of which are antiquated, reflect what is actually on the lines and in the CO. Moreover, Prism continues to see the greatest risk imposed by line sharing as the threat to the continued protection of voice and 911 services. As the Commission is well aware, the introduction of new high-speed services provided over twisted copper loops in the ILECs' networks raises the possibility of unwanted cross-talk or other degradations when different technologies are deployed within the same or adjacent binder groups. In Prism's opinion, under

¹¹

Prism notes that the comments of a number of incumbent local exchange carriers refute the Commission's authority to mandate line sharing, in part, because, in their opinion, line sharing does not satisfy the "necessary" or "impair" standards of Section 251(d)(2). *See e.g.*, Ameritech Comments at 2; Bell Atlantic Comments at 7; GTE Comments at 19; SBC Comments at 16; US West Comments at 11. Prism supports the Commission's conclusion that it is appropriate to develop a record on the issue of line sharing at this time, since, as the Commission has itself acknowledged, "[t]o the extent that any redefinition of the local loop, or other network elements, affects any conclusions drawn from this proceeding, [the FCC] will revise [its] analysis accordingly." *FNPRM* at 48.

no circumstances should the implementation of line sharing disrupt the consumer's regulated voice service.

CONCLUSION

In short, while Prism supports the actions the Commission has taken in this proceeding to promote competition in the advanced services market, it urges the Commission to carefully contemplate the policies, processes and methodologies by which it will implement its proposed measures.

Respectfully submitted,

PRISM COMMUNICATION SERVICES, INC.



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Dated: July 22, 1999

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Peter M. Hannon, a legal assistant at the law firm of Piper & Marbury L.L.P., hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the Reply Comments of Prism Communication Services, Inc. was sent via first class, postage prepaid mail to the following individuals, this 22nd day of July, 1999.

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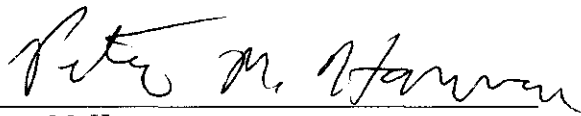
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* Delivered via Hand Delivery.